

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of assessing ~~a grade~~ the extent of vascular injury, ~~characterized by comprising:~~

determining by immunoassay the level of PTX3 (Pentraxin) in a test sample from a subject compared to a control sample;

wherein the extent of vascular injury is rated by at least one of the following histological parameters (a) lipid core size, (b) thickness of fibrous cap, (c) strength of shear stress, and (d) extent of inflammatory infiltration.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~a grade~~ the extent of vascular injury represents the severity of heart disease or the severity of cerebrovascular disease.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~[[or 2]]~~, wherein the test sample is blood, serum, or plasma.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn--Currently Amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the PTX3 protein level of the test sample is determined by use of an anti-PTX3 antibody.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The method according to claim 4, which employs an anti-PTX3 antibody immobilized on a carrier and an anti-PTX3 antibody labeled with a labeling substance.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The method according to claim 5, wherein the labeling substance is biotin.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn--Currently Amended): The method according to claim 4 ~~any one of claims 4 to 6~~, wherein the anti-PTX3 antibody is an antibody recognizing full-length PTX3 or a peptide fragment thereof.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): A diagnostic agent for assessing a grade of vascular injury, the agent comprising an anti-PTX3 antibody.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The diagnostic agent according to claim 8, which comprises an anti-PTX3 antibody immobilized on a carrier and an anti-PTX3 antibody labeled with a labeling substance.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): A method of screening a medicament for vascular injury, characterized by administering a test substance to an animal or bringing a test substance into contact with a cell, and determining variation in amount of PTX3 protein or a PTX3 gene.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): The screening method according to claim 10, wherein the vascular injury is a heart disease or a cerebrovascular disease.

Claim 12 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said PTX3 (Pentraxin) comprises SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 13 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is blood.

Claim 14 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is plasma.

Claim 15 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is serum.

Claim 16 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is obtained from a subject who does not have a cardiovascular disease.

Claim 17 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is obtained from a subject who has not had a myocardial infarction.

Claim 18 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is obtained from a subject who does not have a cerebrovascular disease.

Claim 19 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is obtained from a subject having diabetes.

Claim 20 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is obtained from a subject who is overweight or who smokes, but who has not had a cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease.